



LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

December 20, 2012

Members of the Board of Directors
Lycée Français de la Nouvelle-Orléans
5951 Patton Street
New Orleans, LA 70115

Dear Directors:

First, my very best to you for the holiday season and the new year. I thank you for your service to your community and its children. Your school's mission to ensure a rigorous, college preparatory, French immersion education will prove to be a model, I believe, for the rest of our state. It is an important piece of the education renaissance in your great city.

I write specifically to inform you that the Department of Education and the Louisiana Charter School Association have finalized a partnership that will support the Lycee Francais board of directors in what we believe is its most critical next step, the search for a full-time chief executive officer.

Allow me first to commend you for important strides you have recently taken:

- The recruitment of a highly motivated and skilled teaching staff through your partnership with the Counsel for the Development of French in Louisiana (CODOFIL)
- The hiring of a competent business manager, who has rectified a deficit
- The hiring of an experienced academic director, who can ensure implementation of your unique curriculum

Issues remain, however, that need to be addressed. These issues are not unique to Lycée Français; they are common in many schools, be they traditional public, charter public, or private. Indeed, they are common to new organizations generally. But it is important that you solve these challenges expediently so that the organization can focus all of its energy on the mission that truly matters: student learning and development.

Here are some critical issues for immediate resolution:

- There is not at present a full-time chief executive officer leading operations and management in the school.
- This can lead to a lack of coordination and communication with all of the school's constituents, among them parents and teachers.
- This also has led to board members playing roles in the operations of the school that go beyond the traditional bounds of governance.

Louisiana Believes.

In light of this, and having discussed this with your board's leadership and other board members, I have asked Louisiana Charter School Association Executive Director Caroline Roemer if her organization would fund an outside consultant that will achieve the following objectives through an expedient engagement with you:

- An analysis of leadership capacities and processes in the organization to identify gaps a strong CEO would need to address
- The creation of a CEO candidate profile, on which a search would be based
- The design of a CEO search process that ensures comprehensive examination of candidates, as well as appropriate involvement and transparency across the school community
- Other recommendations to the Department and to the board of directors regarding the roles and processes within the organization and board that have resulted of this engagement.

Ms. Roemer and the Charter School Association have agreed to fund an engagement meeting these parameters through private funds. No public funds or school funds will be spent on this project. If there is the need for further work by the consultant, such as managing the search process itself, or leading the implementation of other recommendations, we will discuss this with you at the conclusion of this initial phase and will make plans for funding as appropriate.

Ms. Roemer and I have also determined that the most qualified partner to manage this process is the management consulting firm of EMH Strategy, based in New Orleans. Founded by a professor of business at Tulane University, EMH has extensive experience advising on projects related to both governance and management, especially in entrepreneurial organizations such as yours. Their leader for this project will be Jeremy Hunnewell, a certified public accountant with an MBA from the Kellogg School of Management and experience consulting with Fortune 500 companies and non-profits alike.

In the new year, my office will be in touch to schedule a starting discussion for this important project.

I thank you again for your commitment to your community, your school, and, above all else, your children. Happy holidays to you all.

Sincerely,



John C. White
State Superintendent of Education

CC:

Hon. Karen Carter Peterson, State Senator
Hon. Eric LaFleur, State Senator
Hon. Walt Leger, State Representative
Hon. Penny Dastugue, President, Board of Elementary and Secondary Education
Hon. Chas Roemer, President-Elect, Board of Elementary and Secondary Education
Hon. James Garvey, Vice President, Board of Elementary and Secondary Education
Hon. Kira Orange-Jones, Board of Elementary and Secondary Education District 8
Hon. Jean Claude Brunet, Consul General of France in New Orleans
Ms. Giselle Schexnider, Interim Chief Executive Officer, Lycée Français
Faculty of Lycée Français
Mr. Joseph Dunn, Executive Director, CODOFIL
Ms. Caroline Roemer, Executive Director, LA Association of Public Charter Schools
Mr. Jeremy Hunnewell, Co-Founder, Elstrott, Maurer & Hunnewell LLC